

**INVESTIGATION PROJECT:**  
**REPRESENTATIONS ABOUT THE PROFESSIONAL ROLE OF RECENTLY GRADUATED**  
**FROM THE PSYCHOLOGY CAREER, STATE UNIVERSITY OF LA PLATA.**  
**ITS RELATION WITH JOB INSERTION AND PERFORMANCE**

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**Abstract**

In this paper we present a research that took place between 2010 and 2012 included in an investigation scholarship awarded by the State University of la Plata. It is about the problem with the transition between college and professional work. It is a part of the produced studies on the importance of social representations as factors that impact on the performance of specific activities. In this case it's about finding out the relations given among the representations about graduated professional role of the Psychology career and its job insertion and performance. The theoretical framework corresponds to Social Psychology and Guidance theories. Methodologically this is an exploratory and descriptive study, based on the "triangulation" conception, of multiple type, that allows combining in the same investigation, different strategies, theoretical perspectives and sources; however qualitative techniques were prioritized to analyze data. Finally there are some considerations about the social representations concerning to the professional performance, mainly in the clinical field associated to education, and also to the problems of both situations over other fields.

**Key words:** representations - role – psychologists - work

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**I. Introduction**

This research deals on the transition between college and professional work. It is part of the produced studies about the importance of social representations as factors that impact on the performance of specific activities. In this case it's about finding out the relations given among the representations about graduates, professional role of the Psychology career and its job insertion and performance.

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The theoretical framework corresponds to Social Psychology and Guidance theories. Contributions of different authors are considered, specifically the Social Representations Theory, developed by Serge Moscovici (Jodelet, 1985) and authors coming from the Vocational and Occupational Guidance (Super, 1973; Repetto Talavera, 1992, Gavilán, 2006). In the last case it becomes relevant the consideration of the *career development*, which includes not only academic studies, but also the events around the context that is involved in this vital cycle.

Jodelet (1985, p. 54) defines social representations as the “*product and process of a psychological and social elaboration of the real*”. Aisenson (2005) in relation to this concept, states as follows:

*“Different authors agree to characterize the representation as a way of practical knowledge that links a subject with an object. It deals on informations, attitudes, beliefs, opinions, images, values, etc, that are organized as a knowledge that says something about some social object (...). When qualifying this knowledge as “practical” it refers to the experience from which it is produced, to the contexts and conditions in which it appears and mainly to the fact that representations are used to actions over the world and over others. As the representation is a pre-codification system of reality, it becomes a guide to the action, from three key factors: 1) it defines a priori the sort of relations and cognitive practices that the individual have to adopt in a situation or tasks to do; 2) it produces a system of anticipations and expectations, exerting an action over reality and 3) it prescribes behaviors and social practices as it reflects the nature of rules and social ties. According to the representation, you can define what is licit, bearable or unacceptable in a given context. So what matters is the expression and interpretation that groups make of the social objects that they consider meaningful”.*

From another sources, the contributions of Super (1973) and Repetto Talavera (1992) have considered guidance as “*the process of support to a person to develop and accept an adequate and complete self-image and its role in the labor world, verifying this concept against reality, giving satisfaction to oneself and society*”. This emphasizes the psychological nature of vocational choice and unifies both, vocational and personal aspects.

In terms of career development, Super (1973) considers that this concept is about a sequence of occupations, jobs or charges that a person performs during his labor life. The “career” even goes beyond the limits of a job, covering both, the period when a student is preparing to get in the working world as the retirement stage, when different occupational activities can still be done. Repetto Talavera (1992) adds that it is about “*a process that, influenced by psycho-pedagogical factors over time, guides to identify the best career and the achievement of those skills that lead to an effective*

*vocational behavior*". In this framework Gavilán (2006) considers that guidance interventions will point both, to the subject in its vocational process and to its context, from a preventive perspective, diagnostic, evolutionary and ecological.

In short: while the traditional conception of guidance was merely target youth attendance at the point of finishing high school to chose an occupation or advanced studies, current models of Occupational Guidance is conceived as a continuous process throughout life (Gavilán, 2006).

### **Backgrounds in Argentine and other countries**

In specialized literature there are a lot of investigations carried out in different state universities that have focused on the issue of representations of professional roles. Most of them explore those representations in the student population, linking them with career choices; to a lesser extent, they deal on graduates representations.

At Buenos Aires University the social representations of those who aspired to be admitted to the Common Basic Course were studied (Canessa et al., 2002). It started from the following definition: "*Representation refers to the expressions about careers in which the imaginary aspect prevails over the right information provided by the university. These representations vary according to socio-cultural, personal or time changes and reflect subject's stereotypes, beliefs and desires. They also include prestige and the value assigned to a particular career*".

Among the results, it was found that representations about university, careers and about the occupational profile became a factor of *inertia* that blocked the information offered by the institution, with a negative impact on the vocational choice. Severe distortions were also detected in approaching and processing the information, a vague and prejudiced knowledge concerning to the curriculum and the activities related to the degree. There were also troubles to imagine and to make questions, to put into words ideas and knowledge, that is, to represent their chosen careers.

At the Psychology School from the Buenos Aires University, Aisenson et al. (2005) inquired to students and recently graduated Psychologists about social representations in training and practice. The conclusions remarked that university training guides the choices of insertion fields and professional practice. Students interviewed stated the strong clinical impression that characterizes the career, which corresponds with the weight of the subjects of that curricula area.

*"Possibly these students consider the clinical practice as the main one, even when it isn't single at professional practice and despite it is perceived with low possibilities of paid employability. On the contrary, other areas are considered minor by students*

*and recent graduates, despite they have greater possibilities of paid employability”.*

Young people assign the representations that society has of the psychologist practice to training provided by the university and to professional practices resulting from the first. This directly impacts the chances of employability, as it is considered that psychologists are trained only for tasks associated to provide psychological assistance to patients in a context restricted to an office, whether in the private or public sphere. Besides, it was noticed that the clinical field was precisely identified as a labor insertion, while the other areas couldn't be clearly defined, nor their employability chances.

Other researches taking a historical perspective, deal on how the social representations arise, that is to say their socio-genesis (Castorina, 2003). Noailles (2005) starts from the assumption that psychologist practices don't reflect the essence of the psychologist role, but are the result of a social construction historically determined through power relations. In his investigation he applied a questionnaire to one hundred psychologists graduated since 1960 to 1990 and made a diachronic analysis on the representations of professional practices over that period. Even when some differences were found according to the graduation date, the global analysis resulted on *“the historical presence of a predominant representation of the psychologist role in clinical area, equaling their practice to psychoanalysts”*.

In the same paper it is described another investigation carried out in 1971 about the profile of psychologists from the Buenos Aires Association of Psychologists (APBA), whose results allow to assert that the predominant orientation towards the clinical area has been present since the beginning of the professional psychology in our country. Scaglia and Lodieu (2003) have named this description as a *“hegemonic psychological psychoanalytic model”*.

Recent papers (Dagfal, 2009) describe more deeply the historical reasons of hegemony, and how the particular identity of the Argentinean psychologist has arisen from hegemony.

It should be noticed that the socio-genesis aspect (historical dimension of the representations) will be taken into account when explaining the position of the interviewed psychologists in the present research. Nevertheless, considering the Castorina's contributions (2003, p.34), the emphasis will be on the onto-genesis, that is a process by which people adopt some particular social representations to be included in a group and make specific social identities – in this case it will deal with the professional identity, for example, being a psychologist, psychoanalyst, therapist, healthcare professional, being an employee or a freelance professional -. Also there will be an approach to the micro-genesis, understood as the process through which at

the social interaction – in this case, in what concerns to professional practice – representations are reminded and lead to understand situations in a certain way placing oneself and the others in particular social places (for example: therapist and patient places, in a therapeutic context).

There were also found investigations of related themes in other countries. For instance, Winkler and Reyes (2006) investigated the social representations of Chilean psychologists about the ethical practice. These authors base the choice of the concept of “social representation” saying that, according to Moscovici, it explains “*the knowing of the common sense shared by a social group*”, that in this case corresponds to a group of psychologists. Taking into account the Abric’s contributions, they distinguish central elements from minor ones in the representations that are put into play when confronting ethical issues at practice. They suggest the possibility of change the representations starting from the minor elements, whose role is to defend the core of its eventual transformation. It is meaningful that one of the elements of this core is the “*lack of a definition of the professional role*”, which makes their practice ambiguous and complicates the acknowledgement of the professional field, mainly in organizational and community psychology. Representations about ethical practice were more clearly defined when they were associated to the appearance of the clinical psychologist and were related to the idea of confidentiality. These authors concluded that “*the need to clarify our role of psychologists, first to ourselves and then to the rest of society, so in workplaces, especially in institutions and community fields, our work and ethical demands will be better understood*”.

Summarizing, there are many studies on the predominant role assigned to the psychologist almost exclusively in clinical field, and with a mono-theoretical orientation (Di Doménico, & Vilanova 1999). Moreover, specific practices in other fields are often perceived from the only perspective of clinic. This situation is taken into account when designing the curricula in Psychology career that for historical and current reasons, continue training in line with this orientation (Dagfal, 2009). Even when in recent years it has been a tendency to change this situation, this “model” is still preponderant. Enrique Saforcada (2006) from a sanitarian look, points out that there are restrictions over the university career, related to training so as to limit and/or lead its scope. According to this author the current orientation of Argentinean universities regarding to the training of health professionals and technicians (both in medicine and in psychology) corresponds to the Clinical Paradigm, understanding “clinical” in a restricted sense:

“... *training of this profession is reduced only to health, and within health field, it is limited to mental illness (...), facing illness it is restricted to assistance and, within assistance, is it restricted again to the model of the private office*”. In this way, the

university training leads students to a restrictive process that makes what this author calls “*reductionist cognitive theoretical-technique modules*” that makes psychologists to graduate as “*dis-trained professional*”: he is only able of work in front of a mentally ill, proposing a treatment in a private office. This distortion in the degree curricula doesn't mend but is reinforced in post-degree studies (residency, internship) and is repeated in workplaces. A consequence of this fact is the psychologist tendency to conceive other psychology fields, –educative, occupational or forensic-, taking the clinical model as a parameter, or transferring clinical practices from the private office to the public sphere, being unable to take part efficiently and causing many institutional problems (Saforcada, 1999-2006).

This limited vision of the psychologist scope of action affects not only him, but also to general population –potential user of psychological services- as well as other professionals in institutions, blocking interdisciplinary work. In both cases this reflects on the sort of demands that the psychologist receives, if they are considered of his concern or not, according to this limited vision of his role.

Based on these considerations, it is possible to sustain that the representations that graduates have about their roles will impact in the way of facing and performing their practice, in the ways of explanation of issues related to their work an even defining the sort of demands they will accept, according they consider them of their professional concern.

Finally we can mention an investigation carried out in our faculty, so called “*Social imaginary – occupational reality*” (Gavilán, 2006). Among their conclusions it enhances that university education is still perceived as a guarantee of social mobility, “*the past reality that persists today in the social imaginary ignoring the labor reality*”. Most of people (young people that were completing high school) supported their vocational choice on the professional practice, the kind of tasks concerning to the profession, instead of other factors such as the achievement of comfort or the labor demand.

For these reasons frequently the career choice is based on the wishes of self development without taking into account the economic and social reality of the labor markets. These data will be considered in the present research, confronting them to our graduates' expectations on labor insertion to practice the career they chose.

### **Some data about the labor insertion of psychologists in Argentina**

In a study carried out between 1990 and 1993 about the professional insertion strategies for the UBA psychologists during the first year after their graduation, Eduardo Gosende concludes that “*psychologists are suffering a process of insecurity*

*that seriously affects to recent graduates and is extending to professionals currently in practice*". This process would be associated with the increasing number of graduates and the high preference to the clinical field.

Some conclusions from this investigation are as follows:

- The 59% of achieved labor insertions are in clinical field
- These insertions are precarious in terms of incomes, stability and possibilities of professional development
- The most profitable insertions are due to simultaneous jobs in different professional areas

Modesto Alonso (2009) provides national quantitative data and compares them with the professional situation in other countries:

- 69.000 psychologists were graduated since the creation of the first career of psychology at the '50 till 2008
- 57.631 psychologists are currently practicing
- 1 psychologist each 690 inhabitants / 145 psychologists each 100.000 inhabitants
- The 85% are women

In 2005 the high rate of psychologists put Argentina in the first place among 24 countries revealed by the World Health Organization (WHO). At that time Argentina had 121 psychologists each 100.000 inhabitants, followed by Denmark with 85 psychologists each 100.000 inhabitants. In 2008 we had 145 psychologists each 100.000 inhabitants, so the percentage continues increasing. The last places in the ranking performed by the WHO corresponds to Guatemala and Egypt, that have less than one professional each 100.000 inhabitants.

Alonso's work also points out an "imbalance" in the geographic distribution of psychologist till 2008, finding each 100.000 inhabitants:

- 789 in Buenos Aires City.
- 163 in Río Negro.
- 147 in Córdoba.
- 21 in Santiago del Estero.

According to Alonso, the analysis shouldn't lie on the large number of psychologists in the country, but in making the most of this situation, that is undoubtedly favorable for human resources in the mental health field. Alonso mentions a study by William Robiner showing that in countries that have between 29 and 45 psychologists each 100.000 inhabitants, there is underemployment or unemployment. He thinks that it is due to the lack of statistics, policies and laws that let take the most of these resources,

especially because there is an unsatisfied demand as there aren't enough professionals with respectable labor conditions to respond to it. He also says that almost the 90% of therapists in Argentina are psychologists, while in the 40s and 50s the 95% were physicians. Even if considering that the percentages vary among provinces, it can be stated that most of psychologists (between 50 and 90%) work as clinical psychologists. In the rest of specialties, the distribution is as follows:

- Educational Psychology: between 5% and 40%
- Forensic Psychology: between 1% and 11%
- Community Psychology: between 1% and 2%
- Occupational Psychology: between 0,1% and 10%.

Considering Alonso's contributions, Noailles points out some consequences of this situation. On one hand, the flood of the labor market concerning clinical field and the consequent labor insecurity of psychologists in this field. On the other hand, and paradoxically, the lack of these professionals in problem areas that need to be faced inter-disciplinarily and where a psychological look has much to contribute. Some fields as prevention or community interventions that require different strategies to the private practice aren't explored by the most of psychologists. Complementarily to the hegemony of the psychoanalytic model and to the lack of psychologists in community area, it could be argued that for Argentinean psychologists, the psychoanalytic framework and the community work are mutually exclusive areas. Returning to history, this relation is remarkable considering that among the theoretical referents of Psychology careers, we can find psychoanalysts whose theoretical production and practice were on the social field. Among them we can name Enrique Pichón Riviere, José Bleger and Fernando Ulloa.

The information above mentioned lead to inquire the relations between the social representations concerning to the psychologist role and their labor insertion.

## I- Methodology

**Design.** It is an exploratory and descriptive design (Hernández Sampieri, Fernández Collado, & Baptista Lucio, 1998). It is based on the concept of "triangulation", "multiple" type, which allows to combine in the same research, different strategies, theoretical perspectives and sources. Qualitative techniques have been prioritized to analyze the data.

**Tools.** Interviews and surveys especially designed are used in this work. They are both appropriate to investigate social representations.

### 1. Interview



This tool is divided into three parts. The first one is formal and inquires on general data (among others: name, age, place of origin and current residence, cohabitants, economic information, dates of admission and graduation). The second one tries to get information about the professional field and role representations. The first items are based on the technique of words association to inquire about social representations (Kornblit, 2007). It consists on providing to the respondent an *inductor word* (“psychologist”) and asking him to say whatever he thinks. Then, some questions are made to inquire about the information he has about the professional field: *Which are the insertion fields of psychologists?* Next, for each field mentioned by the respondent, it’s asked: *which is the contribution that a psychologist can make in this field? In which places and/or problems does he work?*

The third part is targeted to study the respondent’s personal path, from the perspective of *career development* (Repetto Talavera, 1992), so it is interesting to get information that begins in his vocational choice when completing high school, until his current situation as a psychologist, going over his career. This allows a first approach of how he has figured the profession representation.

This last part of the interview begins saying: *“tell me about your path through your career and profession, starting with how and when you decided to study psychology until your current situation”*. This slogan is inspired in the qualitative technique of *life stories* (Kornblit, 2007). It points to catch something concerning to the psychic reality, that is to say, it seeks to reach the sense and meaning given by the subject to the events of his life story, not only mere data about them. It is assumed that the respondent’s story is formed by himself and so implies the re-meaning that he gives to his past experiences from the present (in this case, the professional present). Unlike life stories (biographic tales that goes through all the vital experience of a subject), the stories focus the specific topic that is investigated; it is about career and professional issues<sup>1</sup>.

Topics that were not spontaneously mentioned by the respondent were then investigated through some questions, according to five axes: educational background (degree and post-degree); professional background; skills and performance; expectations; professional identity. In this last axe, participants had to complete the following sentence: “related to my profession, I define myself as ...”

## 2. Survey

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1 As an additional document, respondent’s curriculum was required. It was very useful to organize the information provided in this part of the interview.



**Participants.** One hundred of psychologists that graduated between 2010 and 2011 and ten between 2008 and 2010 were surveyed. The participants were selected according to the following criteria: 1) they have graduated between six months and two years ago; 2) not taking part in researches nor full time residency because in these cases the tasks are largely determined, resulting similar paths among professionals. It should be noticed that, on the contrary, this investigation propounds to study the personal path of each participant, as well as their strategies to achieve the labor insertion when they aren't included in a system with pre-established rules about career development.

Respondents were between 27 to 31 years old; they all were admitted in the university between 1998 and 2001 and graduated between 2008 and 2010, being the average length of the psychology career of nine years<sup>2</sup>.

**Procedures.** Data of one hundred and twenty three psychologists graduated between 2008 and 2011 were got with the support of the Teaching Department of the Psychology School. One hundred of them fulfilled the survey; twenty three were contacted by phone or mail, and ten in-depth interviews lasting two hours average were performed. Then they have been analyzed through the ATLAS.Ti, a software to qualitative analysis which systematize and classify the data.

## **I- Results**

From the responses given to the initial slogans – words association (“if I say psychologist, which words do you think of?”) and completing the phrase “a

2 Source: Teaching Department, Psychology School, State University of La Plata.

psychologist is ...” – it is clear that the core of the representation of the psychologist professional role, for this group is the following: a mental health professional/worker that helps people/subjects with a kind of suffering/illness/discomfort. This help adopts different ways as “support”, “assistance”, “improvement of life quality”, “opening a place to thoughts”, “reflection”, “questioning”, “listening”, “movement / value of words”. Some of them mentioned health as the focus of the work of psychologists, whatever their field of practice.

On the other hand, at the last slogan of the interview (“related to my profession, I define myself as ...”) there were two kinds of responses. Those who had stronger labor insertions – meaning paid jobs and / or more experienced – provided responses that were more consistent with the representation found through the first slogan. In contrast, those who haven’t achieved a paid and stable job, couldn’t define themselves as psychologists at present, and referred more or less abstractly to the future: *“a rookie in training, open to the future”, “... a professional involved in my training, trying to grow with experience”, “... I’m starting my profession, covering different areas of insertion, making decisions regarding these areas as well as concerning to my skills and training” ... “I’m on my way to be ... a psychoanalyst ”.*

These young professionals have characteristics in common that are the simultaneous works in different professional fields and the combination of professional and extra-professional jobs. Maybe this is due to none of the professional jobs is profitable enough to be the only one. In other cases a paid job has been achieved, but not in the chosen area. When this happens, the majority choose to work honorary in the chosen field “to get experience”. Beyond singularities, what’s true is that all the respondents have at least two labor insertions, reaching in some cases to four part time jobs. Besides they all work in fields related to psychology, despite sometimes they can’t play a psychologist role. So, many of them complement their activities as psychologists with other labor insertions they consider temporary but necessary as providers of an income that can’t be reached by professional practice.

These extra-professional jobs are considered satisfactory when they are included in fields that can be more or less in contact to the career, for instance: a secretary in the office of more experienced psychologists, administrative employee in the psychology school; very often – deserving a special mention - an employment as a therapeutic companion, after completing the course in a private institution. This job provides both, to advanced students and recently graduates, the first professional job opportunity, which is also considered as temporary, until be placed as graduates.

But dissatisfaction with such works begins to be evident when the period considered temporary extends beyond what’s expected. This period can vary due to individual variables related to the expectations on career development of each professional come

into play. So, many of them in this early stage of profession chose a mixed labor insertion, combining the professional activity (often in their private office) with an extra-professional (the most common example is an administrative employ that provides economical support, stability and some benefits of formal jobs).

All the respondents expect to work in their private offices and most of them are already doing it. This has arisen as a strong wish before graduation. However, when coming true, there are problems – not always foreseen – because this is not profitable enough, the lack of patients and there are many expenses as rent, taxes, license, insurances, etc. There are also other expenses that young professionals consider as investments: post-degree training, psychotherapy, supervision that are all exclusively linked to the clinical practice. The majority are taking courses or internships on clinic, even when their main job– from an economic point of view and workload – are in another field, such as the educational.

Regarding to the choice of the theoretical orientation of the post degree training, the general trend is to psychoanalysis. However two of the respondents were taking a course on brief cognitive-behavioral therapies, and other two were also interested in studying next this kind of approaches, while studying specialized careers on psychoanalysis. So, it appears that both orientations aren't thought as exclusive by some psychologists, who define their perspective as "psychoanalytic", but "more active", meaning a non orthodox way, and at the same time, consider the possibility of using cognitive-behavioral techniques in those cases when the psychoanalytic perspective "is not enough". This usually happens in specific problems, generally working with children, in clinical and educational fields: phobias, enuresis, learning disorders, are some that were mentioned.

On the other hand, all the respondents stated not only the importance but the need of personal psychoanalysis and supervision, due to the necessity of support of beginners, and also due to professional ethic. However, these both concepts are linked to the private practice. In case of supervision, it isn't considered such a need if working in other fields, coincidentally with the underestimation that respondents do of training in non-clinical or non-psychoanalytic specialties. An example is the psycho-diagnosis technique. It is underestimated by some young professionals, however when being asked, they all said they would use them for specific demands. It is the case of complex techniques as the Rorschach test, usually required by judges in the expert reports, or the psycho-technique tools requested by the labor consultants to select staff. The fact of not having experience enough or specific training wasn't mentioned, in some cases, as a significant barrier for performing these activities. Contrasting, the private practice mainly with the first patients causes concern and anxiety to these

beginner psychologists and lead them to search training and advising, sometimes even with more than one supervisor, before “taking a risk”.

Returning to the multiple labor insertion, a frequent combination is the freelance practice and an institutional employ, in public or private organisms or, very often, in NGOs. It is also remarkable the insert in the educational field. Some professionals stated that this combination (private office and educational institution) is “ideal” and felt satisfied with both because they are “complementary”, not only in terms of economics, but also due to they are rewarding and gives different experiences.

Nevertheless, during the interviews, it became clear that what encourages the clinical practice is “desire”, while the main incentive to work in education is “stability”. That is why even when it wasn’t a purpose of this research to study the case of psychology teachers, it was imposed as an analysis variable, because in last years psychology students choose to study simultaneously teaching, mainly because it makes easier to get the first employ, as teaching enables labor insert and stability in scholar contexts, at least in the educational system of the Buenos Aires province.

It should be noticed that less than a half of the respondents had got a job as psychologists and most of them was in the educational field, in scholar counseling or as teachers.

Finally, the following data are relevant regarding to the labor opportunities: most of graduates of the Psychology School of the State University of La Plata come from the province of Buenos Aires, they live now in La Plata city and have decided to stay in this city after graduation. None of the respondents and only the 10% of the surveyed declared the intention of returning home or moving to another city to look for a job.

## **Conclusions**

Since the 90s several authors had called the attention on the problem of the labor insecurity of psychologists (Gosende, 1994; Pacenza 2001; Noailles, 2005) and some of them had related it to the increasing number of graduates and to the imbalance in the geographic distribution (Alonso, 2009). So, it should be thought that, from an objective point of view, the choice of most of the surveyed psychologists – to stay in La Plata city during the first years after their graduation – could hinder their labor opportunity, given the number of psychologists in this region<sup>3</sup>.

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3 According to statistical data from the UNLP, there are 200 graduates at Psychology School average per year. There are also data from the Social Fund for Psychologists of the Buenos Aires Province in its newsletter of June 2012, where it is reported that in 2011 1,470 new graduates joined the Psychologists Association, in order to practice the profession in the province of Buenos Aires. The 74.30% of them are under 35. The population of active members increases at an average rate of 7.3% annually. Almost all the enrolled 2538 from the IX District work in La Plata and there is one psychologist each 312 inhabitants. Finally, in the above mention newsletter it is warned that "the large number of new colleagues who join the profession annually in the province of Buenos Aires, are

However, from the perception of the surveyed group – target of this investigation – this is not considered as an important factor when choosing the career. On the contrary, at the beginning they prioritize the achievement of experience and post degree training in the city beyond the instability of job opportunities that can be reached in this period.

The multiple inserts in different professional fields and/or mixed (combination of professional and extra-professional jobs) appear as strategies to face the difficult transition between university and labor market. It should be noticed that the respondents consider these employments as temporary, keeping the expectation of establishing in the future in no more than two professional fields (generally, private practice and an institution). Therefore it was stated that the difficulties to get a job haven't been taken into account when choosing the career. Neither they have more information on this problem during the years of study.

These results agree with other investigations performed by other schools of psychology (Gosende and Alonso at UBA, Pacenza at Mar del Plata, etc.) which even demonstrated that the “multi-job” lasts all the labor life for most of psychologists.

These investigators have warned about the preponderance of clinic. According to Alonso, most of psychologists are focused on this area, and Gosende points out that in consequence, they need another job in different scopes. Besides Noailles argues the “saturation” of psychologists on the labor market. We think that this can be one of the reasons of the appearance of alternative jobs. The first job is frequently achieved in the educational field, but in the meantime it is increasingly noticed the arisen of tasks as therapeutic companion. It should be noticed that both jobs require a specific training (teaching careers and private courses), and doesn't require a psychology degree.

About therapeutic companion, it is a practice that has recently been remarkably extended among young psychologists and implies an over-qualification. In this sense, there is a devaluation of degrees (Pacenza, 2001).

It seems that the massive tilt towards clinical work is unfavorable concerning employment opportunities and performance of those psychologists who got positions that don't match their interests. Indeed, these professionals invest in clinical training, repeating the degree model (Saforcada, 2006), and damaging the employability<sup>4</sup> in a

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saturation of the psychologists' offer competing in the field of private practice, so that achieving full professional integration becomes difficult, and not everyone will get a position as a direct consequence of getting a Psychologist degree".

4 *Employability* can be defined as the combination of abilities (knowledge, skills, attitudes) that allow people to auto-manage their processes of labor and professional development, improving their possibilities to remain in a position or to find a new one (Nespereira, 2006).

labor market where emerge requirements for other profiles, as for instance the skills to the community psychology field. Added to this it is the lack of specialized training for certain areas, which reduces the possibilities of more widely developing in the field where they had indeed got a position. Such is the case of temporarily employed psychologists to take psychometric instruments in the area of occupational psychology.

Considering the contributions of guidance theories, it is interesting to contrast these graduates labor reality with the imaginary of the vocational choices of university careers. According to Gavilán (2006), the mentioned choices can be held by one side, by the old idea that sustains that university is a guarantee to social mobility; by the other hand, taking into account the kind of tasks to perform in the profession, but labor demand and economic comfort are not considered. That is why the career choice is often based in the wish of the auto-realization, without considering the social, economic and professional reality of the labor market. The same tendency was noticed in the graduates' stories. One can consider a reasonable hypothesis stating that the criteria that guide the vocational choices are similar in the transition from high school to university and from university to the labor market. Even when graduates are in a different stage in the career development, we've found that some of them are still training (in this case post degree training) thinking only of the personal preference, without taking into account other strategic variables to achieve labor opportunities.

Here we can wonder: do the young graduates' decisions about their career, damage their own employability? However, we don't want to reduce the issues of unemployment, underemployment and job insecurity to the scope of individual decisions. In this point we agree with Alonso's contributions (2009) that argue that these issues must be faced through policies and laws based on researches and statistic, making the most of the human resources available in our country. Mainly considering that there is an unsatisfied social demand of psychologists in various problems, but there are not jobs enough in decent conditions. The logical consequence will then be the protection in the private office.

Clarified this point and to conclude, we'll return to the issue of preferences and specialties chosen by psychologists about training and career development. Interviews provided material to think that the sense of these choices can be linked to a particular representation of the professional role. We assert that the core of this representation seems, at first, being related to the concept of health, "in whatever field that the psychologist works", as was told by most of the professionals. However, when thinking of their practice (present or potential) there are difficulties to sustain this representation en fields different from the clinic as for instance, occupational or educational psychology: the role appears blurred and it becomes difficult to define. In

this way the private office returns as a privileged scope, under the idea that there he is *undoubtedly* a psychologist. This could be one of the reasons why this one appears as the favorite labor insertion, because beyond that it results profitable, it will allow holding a professional identity (Pacensa, 2001). It provides security and satisfaction, aspects essential in these early stages of practice, where the role is just beginning to be built.

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